

DRAFT

**Framework Agreement on Himalayan Initiative – Conservation
and Wise Use of Himalayan Mountain Wetlands**

Preamble

AWARE of Conservation and wise use of High mountain wetlands has become an increasingly significant global issue in recent years. And this regional initiative has been emerging from the collective effort of the countries in the region, with the support of Ramsar Convention Secretariat, WWF, and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), other key NGOs, as well as individual experts.

AWARE ALSO the great success of other regional initiative, such as MedWet Initiative, and High Andeans Strategy, in bring all stakeholders together for the collective unified effort in managing their common wetland ecosystem.

RECALLING the Ramsar Resolution VIII.12, which CALLS UPON Contracting Parties, the Convention's International Organization Partners, and other interested bodies, to recognize the hydrological, biological, cultural and socio-economic importance of mountain and high altitude wetlands and to take appropriate and timely actions for improving awareness and understanding of their functions and values; AND INVITES Contracting Parties to develop, as appropriate, national, regional or local strategies and plans for the wise use and conservation of mountain wetlands, in collaboration with other relevant processes; to designate mountain wetlands for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance; and to ensure that effective management plans are developed and applied for these Ramsar sites, as a means of ensuring their conservation and wise use;

RECALLING ALSO Ramsar Resolution VIII. and the Guidance for the development of regional initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands.

NOTING Himalayan mountain wetland ecosystems have significant cultural, religious and spiritual significance – they are a source of inspiration; they sustain the biodiversity of the region and some of the most endangered species in the world; and they have great potential for fostering regional co-operation and promotion of peace in the region;

NOTING ALSO the progress of the initiative has identified more than 200 sites in the region of international importance for their biodiversity and cultural significance, to become Ramsar sites and UNESCO world heritage sites. Furthermore, to initiate joint action, more than 15 sites have been identified for transboundary co-operation.

CONVINCED that international cooperation is essential for the conservation and wise use of Himalayan mountain wetlands, and a “Partnership Framework Agreement” is an important political support for the redevelopment of this initiative.

The Partners of this framework agreement have mutually consented as follows:

PARAGRAPH 1 – Legal Status of this Document

1. This Framework Agreement is a Partnership agreement and is not legally binding.

PARAGRAPH 2 – Objectives

Overall Objective

The goal of this initiative is to provide an international framework to promote dialogue and cooperation between a range of stakeholders including national, state and local governments, site management agencies and owners, Conventions, technical institutions, development agencies, industrial and private sector, academe, non-government organisations, community groups and local people who share a responsibility in conserving a common international resource, to achieve ***conservation and wise use of the high altitude wetlands in the Himalaya-Hindu Kush-Pamir-Alay region.***

Specific objectives

Objective 1 – Develop Database through Inventorying and share of information;

Objective 2 – Develop mechanism and facilities for regional cooperation, networking and capacity building;

Objective 3 – Research and generation of information on High Altitude Wetlands functions and values, as a tool for informing decision-making;

Objective 4 – Management of High Altitude Wetlands, with emphasize on Community-driven participatory management;

Objective 5 – Develop CEPA program for Awareness of the Himalayan mountain wetlands, and encourage participation of all stakeholders in the initiative

Objective 6 – Develop policy recommendations for conservation and management of the Himalayan mountain Wetlands.

PARAGRAPH 3 – Himalayan Mountain wetlands and its Geographic Coverage

Himalayan mountain wetlands in this agreement refer to the whole Himalayan-Hindu Kush-Pamir-Alay region. The current initiative covers geographic region involving the following 10 countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, and Tajikistan. Other countries in the downstream are optional.

PARAGRAPH 4 –Partners

1. Governments may join this Partnership by signing the Partnership, and committing to actions under this Partnership and supporting the objectives of the Partnership.
2. Non-government organisations and inter-Governmental organisations may join this Partnership by signing the text and committing to actions under this Partnership and supporting the objectives of the Partnership.

3. This Partnership shall remain open to additional Partners.
4. A Committee made up of a representative from each member to the Partnership shall be formed to oversee implementation of the Partnership.
5. The Committee should meet as needed at mutually convenient locations and/or through electronic and telephone communication.
6. The Committee may establish advisory groups and expert panels as needed. The committee may also engage the services of a Partner or organisation to serve as the “secretariat” to coordinate and implement activities across the region.
7. If Partners pursue activities that conflict with the objectives of the Partnership, they may be requested to withdraw from the Partnership at a meeting of the Partners referred to item number 5 above (Committee meeting).
8. The Partners should encourage other Governments in the region and non-government organisations, inter-Governmental organisations, industry and the private sector and other stakeholders with expertise in managing wetland resources and site management to join this Partnership.

PARAGRAPH 5 – Withdrawing from the Partnership

1. Partners may withdraw from this Partnership by giving three months notice in writing to the Secretariat.

PARAGRAPH 6 – Amending the Partnership

1. Partners may amend the text of this Partnership by consensus at meetings of the Partners referred to in paragraph 5.

ATTESTATION

Signed by (Government/Non-Government Organisation / inter-Governmental organisation / industry / private sector)	At (Place)	On (Date)

Annex:

- Minutes of the Evian Encounter meeting;
- Workshop Proceedings: Urmqi, Kathmandu and Sanya;
- Ramsar Resolution VIII. 12;
- Ramsar Resolution VIII. 30.